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Congress of the United States

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY
(CREATED PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 585, 79TH CONGRESS)

Executive Registry

3-0307

June 19th, 1952

Personal

General Walter B. Smith
Director, Central Intelligence Agency
2430 E Street
Washington, D.C.

My dear General Smith:

Enclosed is a copy of a column by Joseph and Stewart Alsop in the Washington Post of June 18th, 1952, dealing with alleged information on the hydrogen bomb. I do not pass on the question of the accuracy or inaccuracy of the statements made in this particular article.

However, as a Member of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, I request that you analyze and evaluate this article from a security standpoint, based upon an arbitrary assumption (by no means an admission) that the statements made in this column in regard to the H bomb, are, in the main, true.

Under this completely arbitrary assumption, does the article contain information of a secret and classified nature, the disclosure of which would be injurious to the security of the nation?

Again based upon the arbitrary assumption of truth, would such information, in the hands of public officials, be classified in any of the categories from "confidential" to "top-secret"? If so would the disclosure of such information to unauthorized persons, such as the authors of this column, be a violation of law on the part of the official having possession of such information, and would the publication of the statements in the Alsop column, based upon such restricted information, be a violation of law?

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General Walter B. Smith

-2-

June 19th, 1952

I respectfully request that in your analysis, in the event you find statements in the column (arbitrarily assuming the truth) are inimical to the national security, that you point them out.

Thanking you for your courtesy in this matter, I am

Very truly yours,



Bourke B. Hickenlooper

BBH:mb

Matter of Fact By Joseph and Stewart Alsop

The Nightmare of Our Times

THE NIGHTMARE of our times was unconsciously pointed out, the other day, by Sen. Brien McMahon (D-Conn.). When he announced his presidential candidacy, the Senator offered the construction of a thousand hydrogen bombs as the chief point in his political program. Mass production of weapons of total destruction is certainly an odd bait to dangle before the electorate; yet Sen. McMahon was not exactly talking through his hat.

The truth is that mass output of super-bombs is probably not very far off. An Austrian physicist published the basic theory more than a decade ago. The theory had been much elaborated and refined, and was being actively argued in the scientific inner circle, when Klaus Fuchs was still working at Los Alamos. And today the practical problems have been largely solved, and the testing stage is at hand.

It is important to realize that the successful construction of a true super-bomb will be a development surpassing the construction of the atomic bomb, in the same way that the atomic bomb surpassed the World War II blockbuster. The two weapons are different in principle. The atomic bomb depends upon nuclear fission of the huge atoms of uranium or plutonium. The super-bomb depends upon the nuclear fusion of the small atoms of hydrogen.

ABOVE ALL, the two weapons are different in potential. The last Eniwetok bomb had a power of over 100 kilotons, which is scientists' language for the explosive force of 100,000 tons of high explosive. This is somewhere near the limit of an atomic bomb.

In contrast, the first true super-bomb to be detonated is expected to have a power of

two megatons, which is the equivalent of the explosive force of two million tons of high explosive. Moreover, this is not the end. There are complex limitations of mechanism, and limits also on the size of the super-bomb that can be delivered to a distant target. None the less, the two-megaton bomb can theoretically become the precursor of even greater and more terrible weapons.

The confident anticipation that a two-megaton bomb can now be constructed represents a change in scientific opinion. As first disclosed in this space, the first hydrogen fusion bomb will be detonated at Eniwetok at the end of the summer. This experimental model will not be the true super-bomb, however. Until very recently, there was the most widespread doubt among the best qualified scientists that the true super-bomb could and would ever be built. The vital recent development is that this doubt has been resolved, and that the super-bomb is definitely in prospect.

The character of this weapon which is in prospect goes beyond what the normal human imagination can comprehend. The two-megaton bomb will achieve total destruction in an area of just under 100 square miles. It will devastate by blast an area just under 180 square miles. In its single explosion, a whole vast megalopolis, a great modern capital, can be wiped from the face of the earth with almost the finality of the end of the cities of the plain.

WITHIN the American Government, even the anticipation of this weapon is already causing controversy and heart-searching. Improvements in design have made it possible even long-range fighters to carry atomic bombs. These means of delivery are both vast-

ly more economical and vastly better calculated to penetrate enemy air defense than the huge and costly aircraft now composing our Strategic Air Force. Hence a growing school in the air staff has been advocating a change-over.

But the super-bomb depends for its power on the quantity of the heavy isotopes of hydrogen that is exploded in it. It is necessarily large, and the more powerful it is, the larger it is. It cannot be carried by light planes. Hence Gen. Curtis LeMay is not merely opposing any change in the composition of the Strategic Air Force. He is even demanding authorization for 11 additional wings of the largest jet bombers. These wings would cost somewhere between 10 billion dollars and 15 billion dollars, and on the basis of the present budget, they would knock the rest of the Air Force program into a cocked hat.

Meanwhile, the State Department's advisory committee on disarmament, including such eminent scientists as Dr. Vannevar Bush and Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, has also raised its voice. Because of the super-bomb, the committee is insisting that a bold new effort must be made to explore the possibility of a disarmament agreement with the Soviet Union.

One reason for this, in turn, is the extreme probability that the Soviets will have a super-bomb of their own almost as soon as we shall. They started with the same knowledge. While our hydrogen bomb development was kept in low gear for several postwar years, theirs was almost surely in high gear. So, the fact that this weapon is now in prospect cuts two ways, and cuts very deep. Altogether, the development herein reported promises to and it is time that someone said so.

y Over Cleveland



Associated Press photo.
Second was King Jolie (on rail) with Royal Marvel (on outside) third. Blue Man won the Preakness. Armageddon ran out of money. (See story on Page 19.)

ler as Coach;
m Release

Undefeated
Roe Wins
6th in Row

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they should be men enough to offer.
I've written a long letter to Marshall explaining my feelings.
BROOKLYN, June 17 (AP) — Preacher Roe coasted to his eighth win of the season as

Tigers Beat Yankees on Hit Batsman In 11th, 7-6

DETROIT, June 17 (AP).— Pitcher Jim McDonald hit batter Bob Swift with a pitched ball with the bases loaded and one out in the 11th inning tonight to force in the winning run, the last-place Detroit Tigers edging the leading New York Yankees, 7 to 6. The drama-packed contest was watched by 47,544 fans.

Results

NCAA BASEBALL
Holy Cross 8, Missouri 1
(Holy Cross wins national championship).
INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE
Syracuse 4-4, Buffalo 1-6
Montreal 3, Ottawa 1
Rochester 8, Baltimore 1
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
Minneapolis 5, Toledo 0
EASTERN LEAGUE
Hartford 1, Williamsport 0
Scranton 5, Binghamton 0

largest crowd of the season at Briggs Stadium.

The homehappy tigers got all of their first six runs on homers by Vic Wertz and Pat Mullin, the latter coming with the bases loaded in the second inning.

The winning rally saw Don Lenhardt single, Wertz double and Walt Drobo get an intentional pass to fill the bases. Manager Red Rolfe was forced to bat Swift, who didn't have a hit all season, because there was no other catcher on the bench.

After McDonald threw a ball and Swift fouled off a pitch, McDonald hit Swift with a pitched ball on the left elbow.

Manager Casey Stengel and other Yankees rushed umpire